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THE
HISTORY OF MY PETS,
OR,
MORE TRUE STORIES;

INCLUDING

What became of Jack?

By the Author of
"THE THREE JACKDAWS."

LONDON:
WILLIAM MACINTOSH,
24, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1868.

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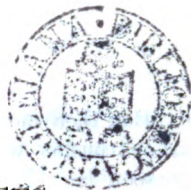
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THE HISTORY OF MY PETS.

MY DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS,

I think it is high time that I should fulfil the promise I made more than two years ago, of telling you something more about my pets. Many of you who have read the story of the Three Jackdaws, have asked so often what became of Jack, that I promised some day to write it for you, together with stories of other pets which I have had at various times in my life. Perhaps you may not *all* care so much about them as you did about Jack, Dick and Bob, but then you see, I am writing for a *great many* little friends, and there is as much variety in the tastes of small persons, as there is in those of grown-up people, so it is possible that what does not please one party, may be just the thing to satisfy another, and as it is my wish to please and entertain you *all*, I have thought it best to vary my stories as much as possible.

Some of you are grown so big and so tall within these last two or three years, that when I look round and see the nursery babies I knew but a short time ago, turned into school-room young ladies, such as Isabel, Florence, Helen and Ethel, I begin to fear that my book will be too childish for you.

But then most of you have some new little sisters, brothers or cousins who are growing older every day, and who will soon be able to enjoy a story as much as you did formerly. There is a sweet little fair Lily growing up out of babyhood, down in the West, and a bright-eyed little Mabel, both of whom are making it their business to walk into the hearts of people who had never heard of them two years ago, for they were neither of them born when I last wrote for you ; and there is a still younger baby, Henry, who will I hope, one day enjoy hearing these stories, when his own dear mother tells him they were written by her oldest friend. Some new little ones there are in India too, and a funny little Carry who is come home from there, who will soon be able to read for herself. I hope little Katie will hear the stories read *very nicely* by her dear aunt, for I know she likes *good* reading, and Connie and Bertie will enjoy them up in their pleasant nursery. I wonder whether little Ralph is grown too big to care for stories ! I hope not, especially as these are all true. Now I will not try your patience any longer, but will commence at once with my recollections of

FLORA

THE PET LAMB.

It is many years ago now, long before any of you little ones were born, that I went to pay a long visit in the North of Ireland, to a sister of mine who then lived there. It was a beautiful country place, on a high hill surrounded by fields, with a fine view of that most splendid piece of water, Lough Neagh,

the largest lake in Ireland. The house was such a funny old building, not at all like any thing you have ever seen in England. However I am not going to describe the place, I only want to tell you of my surprise the first day I arrived there, to find just inside the house door, in the passage, a lamb tied to a hook in the wall! She was not a very small lamb, being nearly a year old. I thought at first that she was a full-grown sheep, and asked the meaning of her being in the house. Then I was told that the lamb, whose name was Flora, had been deserted by her mother when she was very small, and so my sister had brought her into the house, and had kept her under a hen-coop. She used to feed her with milk out of a teapot, and the poor little thing from being a miserable half-starved object, became a great fat strong lamb, with thick, soft, white wool all over her body, and a mild innocent looking face, with such large gentle eyes. She soon became so full of fun and so strong, that when she wanted a game of play, she would kick over her hen-coop, and begin capering about the room like a wild thing, and it was not of the slightest consequence to her, if she happened to upset some small table with a glass tumbler, or a basin of milk upon it; indeed such an event would rather add to her amusement. At last her frolics became so troublesome, and so dangerous to furniture, that it was necessary to banish her to a safer place, so she had a leather collar put round her neck, to which was attached a long rope, and in the day time she was tied out in the fields, and at night in the entrance passage of the house.

It was rather amusing to find this state of things, so different from what one sees in England.

Besides Flora, there were six dogs about the premises; also a cat and some ferrets. Such ugly creatures ferrets are! Did

you ever see one? They are long thin-bodied creatures of an ugly sandy colour, with red eyes. They are often kept in farm-houses and elsewhere, for the purpose of killing rats.

Flora struck up a great friendship with the dogs. Would you like to hear their names? First there was Venus, a very large and beautiful hound, but as she was sent away very soon after my arrival, I knew very little of her. Then there were two very ugly young bull-dogs, Viper and Rose. Two pretty little spaniels, Dash and Jess, and a funny looking long-haired white skye terrier called Blossom. You will hear more of Viper and Dash by and bye; the others I did not care much about.

Sheep are generally terrified at dogs, and will scamper off anywhere if they see one approaching; but Flora, from having been brought up with these dogs, seemed to think them her best friends, and never evinced the slightest fear, even if she saw a strange one; but she was terribly frightened at a strange man. She would run round the full length of her rope, and then leap such a height to try and get loose that she might bound away, if she saw any one whom she did not know approaching her.

Adjoining the house was a corn-field, and beyond that field was a large uncultivated piece of pasture land, full of little hills and dales, and ups and downs, and bits of rock, and furze bushes; just such a place as you children would delight to spend a fine afternoon in, where you could enjoy a capital game of hide-and-seek, and make tables and chairs of the rocks, and pretty little shady arbours under the bushes. Oh! it was such a charming place that Pasture. It was my delight, and there I spent many a pleasant hour with my books and work, and even sometimes with my writing, while Flora enjoyed it as much in her way as I did in mine; for there I used to take her almost daily in the

summer, and allow her to roam about as she pleased without being tied, merely keeping an eye upon her to see that she did not trespass on the corn-field where she would have done mischief. There was not much fear of her straying out of my sight, for she soon attached herself so entirely to me, that she would allow no one else to come near her if she could escape them, and would never willingly lose sight of me.

I have heard that a sheep can never attach itself to more than one person at a time, and this appeared to be true in Flora's case, for from the time that I began to notice her, she seemed to take quite a dislike to my sister who had brought her up, and would butt at her with her head whenever she came within reach. But as soon as I disappeared from the place after a residence there of many months, she again took to her first friend, and remained devoted to her for the rest of her life.

The funniest thing that happened during my acquaintance with Flora was shearing her. You know, I dare say, that sheep-shearing means, cutting all the wool off their backs, and this is done every summer. It is no pain to them, any more than it is to you having your hair cut, unless indeed some careless man should cut a little too close to the skin, and give them a snip with the shears, and that of course is very painful.

When summer came, and Flora was a little more than a year old, she had a beautiful quantity of wool, so soft, clean, and white; and it must have been very heavy too, so we thought she would be more comfortable without it in the hot weather, and we told one of the men that he was to shear Flora, and bring her wool to us. But Flora had no idea of consenting to any such thing! The moment she saw the man approaching, she began to leap and caper and butt, and race first to one side, and then

to the other, as far as her rope would allow ; and as to the man getting within arm's length of her, without using force which we would not permit, he found it quite an impossibility ; so, after trying to coax her till he was tired, we said *we* would try what could be done. I sent the man out of sight first, and then went up and spoke to her, till she was perfectly quiet ; then I sat down on the ground and took her on my lap, and a great heavy thing she was too, I can assure you. So quiet and good she was, poor little thing, as if she knew (and I believe she did know quite well) that I would neither hurt her myself, nor allow any one else to do so. As soon as I had her head safe under my own keeping, my sister ventured to come near, and then we two, sitting on the ground, began to shear Flora with our scissors. Yes, and we accomplished it too, at least I did ; for when my companion was thoroughly tired out, and obliged to go away, I would not leave the business unfinished, but never stopped till I had completely stripped off every bit of her beautiful wool. And do you know, I have in my possession at this very time, a bit of that wool which I cut off Flora's back 25 years ago ! and perhaps I will show it to some of you if you remind me when we meet. Well, how long do you think it took me to finish that work ? Nearly four hours ! I dare say we could have done it in a quarter of the time if we had been experienced and clever at it, but we had never taken lessons in sheap-shearing, and were besides so very much afraid of cutting too close and hurting her, that we made a much longer business of it than was necessary. And all that time you cannot think how quiet and good and gentle Flora was ; reminding us very strongly of that beautiful 7th verse in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, in which our Lord Jesus Christ is compared to a sheep. " He was oppressed and he was

afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, *and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*"

Flora was really a sheep now, and no longer a lamb, though I believe she was called "the lamb" to the end of her days. A good big sheep she was too, and so heavy, that I could not lift her even after all her wool had been cut off. You would scarcely believe how strong she was, unless you had felt something of her power as I once did, and which I did not soon forget. One day when we were in the pasture together, that beautiful hilly field I told you of, Flora had strayed a little farther than usual, so that I lost sight of her.

I immediately rose from my seat and went in search of her, and seeing her at some distance off, I began to call "Flora, Flora." The moment she heard my voice, she started off towards me at a bounding gallop as hard as she could go, and never slackened her speed, till she brought herself suddenly with her head short up against me like a great hammer, and with a blow which knocked me flat on the ground in a moment! I don't know which was the most astonished, Flora or myself. Happily I fell on soft grass and was not at all hurt.

Flora stood perfectly still for a moment staring at me, as if she were thinking, "Well, what have I done now?" but as soon as I picked myself up again, which I did as quickly as possible, she turned away and began nibbling the grass, looking perfectly satisfied that she had done no more than was her duty to do, as she had come when she was called; and *directly* too, without stopping to grumble at it, or to say "I don't want to." Don't you think some of us might learn a lesson from Flora in this matter? I

dare say you know those old lines which run something in this style :

“ Come when you're called,
Do as you're bid,
Shut the door gently,
And you'll not be chid.”

I was thinking what a very ridiculous scene it must have been if any one had been looking on, and hoping that no one had seen it ; but the next day I was addressed very respectfully by a poor man whom I met and who knew me well, saying that he hoped I had not been hurt yesterday. I asked him how he knew any thing about it, and he answered “ 'Deed, ma'am, then I was at work in the next field, and I saw Flora knock you down, and I threw away my spade, and was just after running to help you up, when I saw you on your feet again, so I thought she had not hurt you.” But though Flora did not hurt me, she hurt something and did me some mischief too, which in that country-place was not easily repaired. I had my parasol in my hand when I fell, and it was broken just in half by the fall.

It was very pretty to see the various ways in which Flora would show her affection for me. The people about the farm used to say that they always knew when I was returning from my usual daily walk, long before I appeared in sight, for Flora invariably began bleating and walking restlessly backwards and forwards the length of her rope, appearing to know by some inexplicable means that I was not far off, and she was always right.

During my stay in Ireland, we changed our residence, removing from the old house in which Flora and I had first become acquainted, to a larger one which had just been built, about a mile farther down the road.

When the day for moving, or as the Irish call it "flitting" arrived, there was great difficulty about getting Flora in the mind to flit too. She was never in the habit of going out into the road beyond the fields immediately around the house, and she had no notion of being forced to do anything against her will; so when one of the farm servants took hold of her long rope, and imagined she was going to drive her quietly out of the yard into the road, Miss Flora soon convinced her that she was mistaken; for she just took a running leap to one side and then got behind Matty. And when Matty turned round and began to coax her with "Ah! now Flora, be a good lamb and go on my honey," she took another running leap in the contrary direction, and got behind her on the other side, and then she would stand still and look round for a moment and dart off into a gallop for a short distance, dragging poor Matty who dared not let go the rope into a gallop after her. Then making a sudden stop, off she went to one side again and so on, as if she were going to prove to Matty that *she* was not going to be her mistress, while every one standing round was shaking with laughter. Oh! Flora was very amusing when she took it into her head to show off a bit, and give herself airs.

At last I was obliged to come to Matty's assistance. I told her to let go the rope, and without taking any notice of Flora, I just walked past her out of the yard into the road, when she instantly followed me without a moment's hesitation, and walked behind me all the way down to the other house, without giving the slightest trouble, and as demurely as if she had never attempted to run in her life.

She soon became accustomed to her new abode, and was happier there too; for she had a better yard to live in, and a nice

warm corner in the "byre" or cowhouse to sleep in at night, and plenty of fields where she could roam about as she pleased without being tied, except in the corn season, and then she required pretty sharp watching; for once or twice she got into sad disgrace, by trespassing among the corn, and nibbling the ears of wheat.

Her death occurred in a very sad way, poor little thing. She was as I told you, quite at home with all the dogs about the place, and they with her; so that she never ran away from them, and they never thought of molesting her. But it happened, about a year after my departure, that two new dogs came to live at the farm. They were young bull-dogs who had never been accustomed to have a lamb for their friend, and who seemed to think that she was there on purpose for their amusement. It was supposed they began hunting her at first in play, expecting that she would run away from them, for at that time, all the corn being carried, she was allowed full liberty. Instead of running away, Flora showed no signs of fear; till at last they must have begun worrying her, for, late in the day when she was missed, one of the farm servants found the poor thing standing with her head thrust into a hedge, and terribly torn and wounded about the neck.

The man carried her home, and her wounds were dressed, and they made her a comfortable bed in the kitchen, and they hoped that she would recover. The next morning early, when my sister opened her bedroom door, the first thing she saw, was poor little Flora standing close to the door, waiting for her to come out! Her neck was in such a sad state, and she seemed to be suffering so terribly, that it was thought the kindest thing to do was to put her out of her misery at once, and so it was done,

much to the sorrow of those who had known her so long. When I heard of the melancholy end of my poor little pet, I felt glad that I had not been there to witness her sufferings; and yet I have often thought that had I been there it might never have happened, for I should have looked after her much more than any one else was able to do.

The next of my pets that I am going to tell you about is

V I P E R .

He was the ugliest and the most uninteresting looking of all the six dogs; a great lanky, white, young bull-dog, with very weak eyes and cropped ears, and a most unhappy looking face.

Having only newly come just before I arrived, I suppose he was fretting for his former home, and used to sneak about into every corner he could find, as if expecting to be beaten or kicked by every person who came near him. Neither did he seem to care for associating with the other dogs, who would have been very happy to join in a game of play with him at any time, or even a fight if he preferred it, but he seemed to care for nothing and nobody; lying curled up in a corner nearly all day, trying to make people believe that he was asleep, which very possibly they might have supposed to be the case, had not those who watched him attentively, perceived that there was almost always one eye open, which followed their every movement, while he was no doubt all the time making his observations with a view to future arrangements.

For my part I never noticed Viper at all, as far as I can remember, except to ask his master what was the matter with him, for I feared he was ill. The answer was "He will come all

right in time, he is only shy, and every thing is strange to him." Then his name was so ugly! I suggested that he ought to have a prettier name to make up for his personal ugliness. However the name was not changed, and I thought little more about him at that time.

After a while Viper began to make himself more at home, and would accompany his master and the other dogs in their walks, but always in a quiet, grave sort of way, not at all as if he enjoyed it. The first time that he made himself remarkable to me, was one day when two or three of us had gone for a walk together, and after my sister and I had had enough, we turned back, leaving the rest of the party to proceed farther. As a matter of course all the dogs would invariably follow their master, and so we supposed they had done on this occasion; but presently on looking back, I saw to my surprise that Viper was following *us*, keeping a little distance off, and walking in that grave unhappy-looking way which he had, with his head hanging down, and with anything but an air of enjoyment. "Oh dear!" I said, "here is that poor miserable Viper coming after us, what *shall* we do with him?" "Send him back," was suggested. "Go back, Viper, go back, sir," and I tried to drive him, but he only turned a few steps, and then stopped, looking very wistfully at me, and as soon as I walked on, so on walked he, keeping the same distance behind. "Oh! well, you may come if you wish," we said, "but you will lose half your walk." And so we forgot him, and he followed us home.

Another day much the same thing happened, and another, and another, till at last there came a day when my sister was not of the party, and I turned back alone.

I thought "now surely Viper will not come with me"—but

yes, as soon as I turned, he turned, so we began to think it must be me to whom he had taken some strange fancy, and not to his mistress.

I suppose it was this idea which made me begin to take a little more notice of him, though I still called him an ugly fellow with an ugly name, which he surely was. But oh ! you cannot think how grateful he was for a little notice from me. A pat on the head, or a kind word, would bring quite a new expression into his face, till at last I felt some curiosity to discover what Viper's character really was ; and whether beneath that ugly white coat of his, there was not something worth cultivating.

Accordingly we began to try experiments. We used to walk out together, separate in all kinds of unlikely places, and meet again in still more unthought-of spots, for you know it was a beautiful country place, and very hilly in that part of Ireland. Then sometimes I would try and hide from him, but it was all to no purpose. Viper was wide awake now, and growing every day more lively, and nothing would induce him to lose sight of me out of doors ; go where I would there was he at my heels.

Well then, I said I must accept Viper as a friend, and in spite of his ugliness I was beginning to grow really fond of him, in return for the great affection he shewed me. And so it ended in his being always called my dog, and I do not think I ever went out for a walk without being followed by Viper if he was loose ; and if he happened to be chained and saw me starting without him, he took care to let the whole neighbourhood know that he wanted to go too, for he was like a mad thing. If I loosed him myself he would nearly knock me down with joy, so that I was obliged at last generally to start alone, leaving him howling and whining for a few minutes, till I had got some little distance from

home, having previously requested some person to loose him as soon as I was out of sight. No matter which road I took, I was sure to hear him presently tearing and panting after me at the top of his speed, so that he could never stop himself so soon as he wished, but would go on many yards beyond me before he brought himself to a stand still, and then when he did stop, he would walk quietly back and look up in my face with a comical expression which seemed to mean, "There now! you see I am come, though you did try to leave me behind." And indeed, poor Viper, I had no wish to leave him behind, for I became so accustomed to him, that I should have been very sorry to go any where without him.

He was a wonderfully good-tempered dog, though of a very savage species, and was friendly with every body, unless he thought any one was going to molest me, then I suspect he would have shown them what he was made of.

One day I was walking on rather a lonely road, and saw two or three men coming in the opposite direction. They were talking very earnestly, and just before they reached me, they all stopped, and continued their conversation standing. Viper did not happen to know the men, so though they never noticed either him or me, I suppose he did not like their looks, for he immediately placed himself in front of me, and advancing a few steps towards them, uttered such a growl as I had never heard from him before, and looked as if he were capable of flying at all three at once if necessary. I spoke to him and then he quietly followed me, but ever after that, I felt a sense of security in Viper's company, which I never felt with any other dog.

But though Viper was bold and courageous when he thought

me in danger, I once saw him very much frightened, and that only by a bird !

I was in the habit sometimes of visiting the poor people in their cottages, and very funny things I have occasionally seen there. When I have finished about Viper, I will tell you something that has just come to my memory. One day I had entered a cottage and taken a seat, with Viper standing very demurely by my side ; for I must tell you that he was a very well-behaved dog when he went out visiting. He never interrupted people in their conversation, or asked tiresome questions, or even touched any thing he saw without leave, but he would often lie down close to my feet and go to sleep till it was time to depart. On this occasion, however, he had scarcely had time to lie down, but was standing close to me, when suddenly without any warning, I felt a tremendous flap from the end of what appeared to me a great bunch of white feathers, accompanied by a loud hiss, and at the same moment Viper gave a great start and a scream, and ran round to my other side for safety ; while the woman of the house jumped up with an exclamation, and seized—what do you think ? a great white gander with outstretched neck, and wide spread wings, dragged him outside the cottage and shut the door in his face ! And all this happened in less time, than I have taken to write or you to read it. When we had a little recovered from our surprise and astonishment, I asked what it all meant, and then I discovered in a corner of the cottage *under a table*, a goose sitting upon her eggs, and looking on as composedly at what had just taken place, as if she were quite accustomed to such scenes.

You see the old gander was a very attentive husband, and kept watch all day outside the door, to see that nothing entered

the cottage which might disturb his wife or her eggs ; so when he saw Viper walk in, he thought he was rather a questionable visitor, and not liking the look of him, thought the best thing he could do would be to turn him out quickly. So he got himself up into a great passion, ruffled up all his fine feathers, stretched out his long neck as far as it would go, and hissing like a tea-kettle boiling over, he made a rush at Viper and struck him with his strong wing, instead of saying "Come, you just march out, you have no business here," but it meant the same thing I suspect. You would hardly believe what a violent blow they can give with those great strong wings when they are angry.

I was very glad that Viper was so taken by surprise like myself, that he only thought of escaping that strong wing ; otherwise, had he been at all aware of the attack that was coming upon him, I fear he would have seized the long throat and given it one bite, and there would have been an end of poor gander and his hisses for ever !

I do not think I have any more to say about Viper. He did not live many years after Flora. I heard in due time that he was dead, but I never knew what was the cause of his death.

Now before I proceed to my next history, I think I will tell you the little story I promised.

Soon after I arrived in Ireland, I begged the friends with whom I was staying, to take me into some cottage, that I might see for myself whether the funny stories we hear about Irish cabins were true, such as having their pigs, cows and donkeys and fowls to live in the house with them.

An opportunity soon occurred. We were driving on the car, some distance from home, when the master drew up at a small cabin by the road-side, having business to transact with the

man who lived there. He told me if I wished to see a specimen of a real Irish cabin now was the time. Accordingly I alighted and entered the dwelling. The first object that attracted my notice was "the pig," a monstrous animal looking quite at home, standing warming its nose over the fire, *close* beside a little boy of about three years old, who was sitting on the floor almost *in* the ashes, with a hot potato in his hand.

In a corner which was certainly the cleanest part of the room, upon some straw, lay five or six nice little fat pigs, with a clean cloth covered over them !

I made up my mind then, that the people take more care of their pigs than they do of their children.

A pretty looking woman was standing by a table ; no, not really a table, for there was not such a thing in the room, but a large chest which served the purpose of one, upon which she had just placed a smoking pot of hot potatoes or "pratees" as they call them ; two other children standing near her, ready to begin their dinner. A small bed in a corner, and I think a few shelves, completed the furniture of the house, or apartment, for it was nothing more. The chimney was simply a large hole in the roof, through which, when I looked up, I could plainly see the sky. I asked the woman whether the rain did not sometimes inconvenience her through that gap ; she answered with the utmost indifference "Deed does it," which means "Indeed it does." I then said "Is that the only bed for the whole family ?" "'Deed is it," she answered in a voice that bespoke the most perfect contentment.

Perhaps you don't know that the Irish are famous for answering one question by another. It sounds funny at first, but it is nothing when you are used to it.

I had some trouble to imagine how a father, mother and three children could all pack themselves away in such a small bed.

If I had been *obliged* to pass the night in that cabin, even with the bed all to myself, I should decidedly have chosen a berth with the little pigs, as being the cleanest spot in the house.

Well, I learned one lesson there, which I never forgot. I thought what a beautiful thing a contented spirit is, and how much more this poor woman was following the precept which we read in God's Word "Having food and raiment let us therewith be content" and "Be content with such things as ye have," than many of us have ever done, who are surrounded with comforts and luxuries, while she had but a scanty supply of even the food and raiment, and had to work hard for them too.

When you are inclined to grumble or to cry, or to be cross because everything does not go exactly as you wish it, try and think of this poor woman with her one room, the hole in the roof for a chimney, one little bed for the whole family, and eating nothing but potatoes for breakfast, dinner and supper, at least six days in the week ; and thank God for His great goodness to you, in giving you so many good things to enjoy, and say

"Not more than others I deserve,

Yet God has given me more,

For I have food while others starve

And beg from door to door."

DASH.

I do not think there ever could be a funnier little dog than Dash. You know he was one of the *six* I told you about which lived in Ireland.

He was a very pretty black and white spaniel, small and fat, with short legs and long ears, and eyes that generally made you understand his meaning as well as or better than some people's tongues.

People said he did all but talk, and indeed he was a most amusing companion, and I liked to take him out for a walk sometimes on that account, though I never cared so much for Dash as I did for poor Viper. I suppose it was because being everybody's favourite, he had to divide his affection between so many, that he did not attach himself to me or to any one in particular, though he was more obedient to his mistress than to any one else; whereas Viper who was despised by others on account of his ugliness, gave his whole affection to me, and so it was impossible to help liking the poor fellow.

However Dash and I were excellent friends. His whole happiness from morning till night seemed to be in playing at ball.

Oh how delighted some of you children would have been to have had him for a playfellow! Those beautiful large balls that you Mary, Emmie, Helen and Beatrice are so fond of playing with in your great hall, would have charmed him, and he would have charmed you with his antics. He was never tired of fetching and carrying.

No matter whether it was a stone or a potatoe, a ball of wool or a glove, it was all the same to Dash, if only he could carry it in his mouth, and get any person to throw it for him to a distance. Of course any thing round and inclined to roll pleased him best; then he would scamper after it, bring it back, lay it down at the person's feet, and do the same thing a hundred times, or as long as he could get any one to throw for him.

At the foot of the Pasture, where Flora and I used to spend

so much time, was a little valley containing about half-a-dozen very small quiet-looking cottages. In this valley dwelt two dear little children about five and six years old, named Mary and Johnnie. They were not brother and sister, neither did they live in the same cottage, I think they were some kind of cousins though, and they were very constant playfellows.

When first they began to observe me far away up the hill, sitting on my stone seat under the hedge, they would stand and stare, but never venture very near. By degrees I made their acquaintance, and then their great delight was, whenever they saw me sitting there, to come up the hill and either sit on the grass or stand near me. Sometimes I talked to them, sometimes I told them I was busy, and sent them down again, but sometimes Dash was with me, and I hardly know which was the most delighted to have a game at ball, he or they. They would scamper about like little lambs over the hillocks and bits of rock with their little bare feet, and Dash would bring them all the stones he could find, or that his mouth could possibly hold, and those three did have fine fun together I can tell you. Oh! Ralph how you would have enjoyed Dash! and though I never saw you, Elliot and Hermann, I think you also would have liked a game with him; and as to you, little Hubert, I can hardly fancy any greater pleasure for you and Marian and Edith, than a good race among those hills with that comical little dog.

Well, this little Johnnie and Mary knew all my seats as well as I did myself. I had one for the morning and one for the afternoon, according to the position of the sun, and some for cold days and others for sultry ones, and nobody was allowed to touch a stone in any of these places, if the children knew it.

On one occasion, when some building was going on among

those little cottages at the foot of the Pasture, as I was afterwards told, the men went up into the field to look for stones. They had no business to do so, because the land was private property; however they went, and presently they came near one of my seats which looked very tempting to them, being composed of the very sized stones which they were in want of. So they began pulling them down, and would soon have made a complete clearance, when Johnnie who was happily not far off, seeing what they were about, made a rush at them in a state of great excitement, and told them they *could not* have those stones; it was "The Lady's" seat and nobody must touch them. One of the men himself told me afterwards of Johnnie's distress, in a very amusing way.

One day Dash went out for a walk with me, to see a poor woman at some distance. I sat in the cottage for some time talking to the woman, and quite forgot Dash who was remarkably quiet.

By and bye when I attempted to rise from my seat, I felt myself weighed down by something heavy at the bottom of my dress, and on looking down what do you think I saw? A whole row of potatoes, perhaps two or three dozen, laid upon the skirt of my dress, and Dash lying close beside them, looking from them to me, and from me to them, in the most absurd and earnest manner, saying as plainly as looks could speak, (and they do speak very clearly sometimes) that he wanted me to throw them for him.

It was impossible to help laughing to see the absurd little animal surrounded by his potatoes; and this had been his amusement for nearly half an hour!

In Ireland it is the custom for the poor people (or *was* before the famine) to live almost entirely on potatoes, and they generally

kept a large supply of them in a heap in a corner of their kitchen, ready for use.

The woman said she had noticed Dash very busy all the time I had been talking, bringing one after another, laying it down, and each time stopping a little while looking up in my face, hoping that I would throw it for him; then finding I took no notice, he toddled off to the potato corner for another, and I suppose had I remained long enough, he would have cleared out the corner and surrounded me with them like "Toad in the hole." By the bye I heard such a curious story once about a tame toad in China, which I think I must tell you when I have finished all about Ireland, because it is true, and everything that I put into this book you know is true, or else I should not call them "True Stories."

Another time Dash did something of the same kind to his master. There was a large orchard belonging to the farm, and close to the orchard was a little cottage, in which lived an old woman whom every body called "Grandmother," and who took care of the premises. So one day Dash and his master went to settle business with Grandmother, and while the master talked, the dog worked. He was very fond of the orchard, because in the season he found such a number of apples lying about, and you might see him at any hour of the day, running about with an apple in his mouth, and laying it at the feet of any person he came near. He would even do this to strangers who were passing by; so when they found a nice rosy apple lying at their feet, they would take it up and eat it. I one day met two children in the road at some distance from home, one with an apple in its hand, and feeling sure it had come out of the orchard, I asked them where they found it, and they answered "Please ma'am a

little dog brought it to us." No wonder Dash was a favourite! Nobody in the neighbourhood would have dared go into the orchard and take an apple, but every body thought they had a perfect right to accept one as a present from Dash, though he, silly little fellow, thought they were going to amuse him by playing at ball with it. He had no notion that they wanted to eat his plaything. But I have not yet told you what I was going to say about his master, who was sitting in Grandmother's cottage, with a coat on which had large loose pockets on each side with a very wide opening.

Well, Dash seeing him sit there, apparently doing nothing, thought "Surely now I can induce master to have a game of ball with me, I'll be off into the orchard." So away he toddled with a sort of little waddling run that belonged especially to himself and his short legs, found a nice large apple and brought it to his master's side. Standing on his hind legs, he laid his front paws on his arm, and tried in every possible way to attract his attention, at the same time his mouth being just over the great side pocket.

After waiting a reasonable time, such as only patient Dash would have patience to wait, he just dropped the apple out of his mouth into the pocket, thinking perhaps "Oh! master does not like this apple, I'll go and find another." And he brought another and another, disposing of each in the same manner, until the master at length rose to depart, felt one of his pockets very heavy, put in his hand, and found it nearly full of apples! while Dash was standing at his feet quivering with excitement and delight, to think that *surely now* he *was* going to have a first-rate game of ball.

Was not Dash a funny little dog? But what will you say, I

wonder, when I tell you that sometimes when he could get no one to play with him, he would throw something for himself to run after? Yes he really did, and very often when I have been sitting under a high bank, I have seen him do it, and this was the way. Perhaps I had been playing with him and throwing a stone till I was quite tired of it, and when he had brought it to my feet, and laid it down for about the hundredth time, I told him to go away. He would then sit and look at me very intently for a bit, but when he found I was in earnest he quietly took up his stone and climbed to the top of the bank. He then laid himself flat with the tips of his front paws just reaching over the top; he then, most gently and carefully laid the stone on his paws, and settled his nose *as* carefully just behind it. Then he gradually pushed his nose nearer and nearer, but very slowly, till it touched the stone. A little push—and over it went with a bound to the bottom of the ditch below. Down rushed Dash after it, picked it up, mounted the bank, and went through the same process again, and again, I cannot tell you how often.

I was so surprised the first time I saw him do it, that I could scarcely believe my own eyes. I do think he was the cleverest and most patient dog I ever knew, and the most persevering. Little boys and girls might learn a good lesson from him if they would, both in their play and in their work, for you know you all have work of some kind to do, whether it be learning lessons, writing exercises, doing a sum, or simply obeying Papa and Mamma in what they tell you to do; or whether like Dash, you have set yourself something to do. Whatever it may be, try always and remember what we read in the Bible, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Any thing that is worth doing at all, is worth doing well and thoroughly.

CATS.



"Oh nasty things, I hate cats!" I have often heard some people say, and I always answer "That is only because you don't know them." I have been on intimate terms with many cats in my life, and I am quite certain that if they are well treated, they are capable of feeling a very strong affection in most cases. There may be a few bad dispositions to be met with among them, and I have myself heard of instances, where all the kindness and care bestowed has failed to drive out the spitefulness of some natures. But then it is very unjust to hate all cats, because we meet with one spiteful one occasionally. Quite as unjust as it would be, to dislike all children, because we have had the misfortune to know one or two naughty, disagreeable ones some time or other. Don't you agree with me? But however if any of you have a great dislike to cats, you can very easily skip a few pages, only I warn you that by so doing, you will presently miss one of the funniest and most curious stories in the book. I am not going to say very much about the cats I had when I was a child, because I have forgotten a great deal about them. I have had black cats and white cats, grey, tabby, tortoiseshell and sandy cats. Some I kept for several years, and some were lost or killed accidentally after a shorter time, but the greatest pet of all I think, was one named Lou, (after the friend who gave her to me) and I kept her a great many years, and she was the best mouser I ever saw. She was a pretty tortoiseshell, and all the tortoiseshell cats I ever had after that, I was fond of for Lou's sake, and to this day I would rather have one that colour than any other. After Lou had been with us for some time, she had a companion brought to the house, such a pretty little creature, perfectly white; and she

was named Carry after the lady who gave her to us. She and Lou were great friends, and very seldom quarrelled in the way cats generally do. And then Lou had a daughter, which grew up a beautiful cat, much finer and larger, and a prettier tortoiseshell than her mother, and she was called "Young Lou," but I never liked her half so well as my dear old Lou.

Once upon a time Carry had the most beautiful little family to show that ever you saw, and she *was* proud of them, I can assure you. She had six lovely kittens ; five were as perfectly white as herself, and one was a darker colour. It was quite a sight worth seeing, when these little snowy, fat dumplings with their blue eyes, began to play about in their basket and roll over each other. Many a visitor was taken into the room where they lived, to see the white mother and her white babies.

About the same time Old Lou had two or three kittens also, but they were little scraggy ugly things, so they were not kept ; and poor Lou felt very disconsolate for a few days, and walked about the house, mewing for her kittens, which she thought were quite as beautiful, and certainly quite as dear to her, as proud Mrs. Carry's beauties could be.

However after a day or two she seized upon a bright idea, so she wiped her eyes, (if cats ever do wipe their eyes) and cheered up a bit, and one day when pretty Mrs. Carry went out for a little walk to stretch her legs and look about her, leaving her six fat babies fast asleep, up walks old Mrs. Lou, and peeps into the basket, and I dare say thought to herself something like this— "Well, you are tolerably well-looking, I must say, you fat little snow-balls, though you are not half so pretty as *my* lost darlings ; but never mind, I will come and keep you warm while your Mamma is gone for her walk"—so in creeps Lou, and settles her-

self down as comfortably as ever she did in her life, in the midst of the kitten family; and when Carry came home, a little tired perhaps, and preparing to step into her nest, what should she see, but her place filled up by her friend! Carry was a good-natured cat, and perhaps she knew that Lou had been in trouble about her own loss of the skinny, scraggy little ones. So like a kind friend as she was, she just crept in the best way she could, without disturbing Lou at all, and from that day the two friends continued to nurse the babies together, and I don't think they ever knew which of the two was their real mother.

I had the sweetest little grey kitten during that year that I was in Ireland, that used to follow me about, nearly as well as Viper and Dash, and was quite friendly with them also, and they with her.

Sometimes indeed Viper was a little too rough for her, but if he so far forgot his politeness as to bring his great white paw rather nearer than she considered safe, she would set up her back, swell out her tail as big as two, and showing her sharp claws, gently remind him that he had better "mind his manners." Such a pretty little creature she was, and like Viper and Flora, attached herself to me more than to any one else in the house. Sometimes her attentions were quite troublesome, and I should have preferred it, if she had allowed me to walk in the garden alone, for I could scarcely take a step without stumbling over her unless I was very careful, because she would continually be either rubbing herself against me, or rolling on the ground just under my feet, which is the way that cats have of showing when they are pleased. If I went out for an hour or two, I was sure to find the kitten watching for me; and on Sunday evenings in winter, when we returned from church on the car, it was her invariable

custom to be sitting outside the house door to greet us; and as soon as the door was opened, she always led the way in, walked before me as demurely as a little page, upstairs to my bedroom door, stood looking up at the handle till I opened it, then entered the room with me, waited with patience till I had taken off all my cloaks and wraps, and the very moment that she saw me free, she would be up on my shoulder, and there stay if I allowed her, the rest of the evening, travelling down stairs in that position, and remaining so while I was at tea. When I left Ireland I was told that my poor little cat pined very much after me for many days, refusing food, and walking about the premises in a very melancholy way; though I was glad to hear that after a time she recovered her spirits and became happy again.

There was a woman who lived on the other side of that beautiful Pasture which I have mentioned so often, and who used often to be at work up at the house for the day. Her name was Molly, and a nice woman she was. She had a cat which showed a very strong affection for her. The cat was never happy when she was away from home, and used regularly to come every evening to meet her, and escort her on her return; she used to say that had it not been for the dogs, she was sure her cat would have come all the way to the house and stayed with her.

One warm summer's evening, I had stayed out later than usual, and was sitting on one of my seats in the twilight, when I saw Molly at a little distance, crossing the footpath on her way home. Almost immediately after, I saw something dark like a shadow, moving quickly along the ground towards her. I called out "Molly is that your cat?" "Yes Ma'am," she answered, and I walked up to her, and there was the cat making such a fuss, rubbing against her dress and throwing itself on the ground un-

der her feet, so that she could scarcely get along at all. I used to say that I thought Irish cats were more sensible and affectionate than English ones, but I do not know if that was correct, for I have had a very sensible one since that, in England.

This was another tortoiseshell, that I had for more than seven years, and she used to open the garden door and let herself into the house when she chose. What do you think of that? It was some time before we discovered how she did it.

The servants used often to be very much surprised after having shut her out safely in the garden, as they thought, to find her presently after, walking quietly into the kitchen, or if they had been upstairs for a short time, they would find her asleep before the fire. They used to tell me they were sure that Pussy opened the garden door herself, but I only laughed at the idea, and thought no more about it, till I saw her do it with my own eyes and then I knew it was true. The door fastened with a latch, and close by the latch was a curved piece of iron which served as a handle on the outside to pull the door to.

One day I was coming in from the garden, and when within sight of the door, I observed my Pussy walk up to it as close as she could, then look up at the latch. "Oh now" thought I "she is going to let herself in, if she can." So I stood perfectly still and watched her. In a few moments she made a spring—hooked one paw in the iron handle, and with the other pressed the latch, which being a very easy going one, immediately gave way, and the door with her weight to help it, swung open, when she dropped gently to the ground and walked into the kitchen, just as if nothing uncommon had happened; and from that time, I did think that my tortoiseshell beauty was the very cleverest cat I had ever heard of.

After that I happened once to be inside when she let herself in, so that I saw her swing in with the door and drop to the ground, that being a part of the performance which I had lost sight of from the outside, because I did not dare move or let her see me; had I done so, she would have made no attempt to open the door, but would have come rubbing up against me, by way of asking to have it done for her. Sometimes the door would happen to be bolted inside, and then poor puss after giving a rattle or two with the latch, was obliged to drop down, for she could not support herself, hanging by one paw, for more than a few seconds at a time. Then she would wait a little while to take breath, and fry again. I have heard her rattling the latch when I have been upstairs, and soon learned to know the sound which meant "I can't get in, open the door *please*." You must know she was a very lady-like cat, so I always concluded that she meant "please," by the pretty way that she asked for any thing. And I am sure she always said "Thank you" by her actions as plainly as she could without words; for as soon as I had run down and opened the door for her, which you may be sure I did if no one else was nearer, she would begin purring with all her might, and rubbing against me, and arching up her back, which were all very expressive signs of gratitude and thanks. Oh dear! I sometimes think what a pity it is that little people as well as big who *can* talk, do not imitate animals who cannot; they are grateful for such little kindnesses, while some children (I do not say *all*, I should be very sorry to say that) will let their Mammias and Nurses take ever so much trouble for them, and spend a great deal of time which they want very much for other purposes, in doing something to please the children, and perhaps after all, when the work is done, whatever it may be, it is carried off by a

thoughtless little one, who does not even think it worth while to say "Thank you, Mamma," or "Thank you, Nurse." How many among you, I wonder, belong to the thoughtless, thankless little ones? Not any I hope.

Well! I have not quite done with my tortoiseshell pussy yet. I am afraid that she was rather spoilt sometimes, for she seemed always to think that she might take liberties with me which she did not with some others. For instance, the cook was very particular, and never allowed her to get up on the kitchen table, and she was quite right too, for it is not a nice thing to have cat's hairs about the table where cooking is going on; and she never thought of doing it in a general way, but whenever I happened to go in the kitchen, she would be up in a minute purring and coaxing, and wanting a little bit of petting, which I was always willing to give her, though I never allowed her to remain on the table. Oh! no, I should be very sorry ever to encourage either a cat or a child to break rules and disobey orders. If she heard my voice calling any one at the top of the stairs, she was up at my feet in a moment, fully convinced in her own mind, that I could not have been thinking of, or calling any one but herself.

I don't know how it was that I never gave her a name. I generally called her Tizzy, and that grew into being her only name besides Pussy. Sometimes she used to go for a little walk of an evening, and at bedtime when the servant was shutting up the house, Tizzy used to behave in a most ridiculous way when she was in a frolicsome mood. There was a large sloping field opposite the house, with only a road and a low wall intervening. So Tizzy would be sitting outside the door perhaps, apparently waiting for it to open and let her in, but as soon as it did open, and the servant began to call her, she just turned away, and be-

gan dancing with her tail up in the air ! or sometimes she would leap on the wall and run up a tree, or let the girl follow her a little, till she thought she had nearly caught her, and then she would bound away a long distance down the road ; so at last I had to go and call her. There was no need to do more than stand at the door and call "Puss, puss, puss," and then immediately hide myself behind the door. In a few seconds Miss Tizzy would come walking along into the hall. *Very* slowly it is true, but still she knew she must obey, and it was very rarely indeed that she refused to attend my call. But she always reminded me of a sulky little child when she came in that with slow pace. Don't you know some little children who when they are told to go up in the nursery, will walk *very* slowly out of the drawing-room, go up the stairs a little way, and then stand hugging the banister, as if they were very fond of it ? And this is just because they don't like to do as they are told *at once*.

I saw a dear little girl do that, not very long ago, and I was so sorry, because I thought she must have quite forgotten that God says "Children obey your parents." I hope by the time she is able to read this book for herself, that she will long have left off such baby ways, and then she will not even know her own picture.

One day Tizzy did a very dreadful thing ! Oh it was so bad. The very worst thing she ever did in her life. I had a beautiful canary ; bright, deep gold colour, which I had reared myself from the nest, and you may fancy I was fond of it. It was tolerably tame too, and often when I was cleaning its cage with the door open, it would climb up outside and play on the top of the cage, and very seldom fly away from it, unless I took it into a room on purpose to exercise its wings. Once I had omitted to fasten the

door, and on coming into the room where it was hanging, I found the bird on the top of the cage! This rather alarmed me on account of the cat, who was often in the room, and I was very glad that she had not happened to be there that day. Some time after this, it happened that I went out for the morning, after having cleaned and hung up my bird as usual, quite safely as I thought in the dining-room window. When I returned, I was met by the servant with a face of great alarm, who told me that the bird had vanished, and the cage door was open! I ran into the room as you may fancy in a state of great excitement; there was the cage—open—empty!

There on the rug was the cat with an expression in her face such as I had never seen there before. The moment I looked at her and said in a severe voice "Tizzy have you done this?" she looked terrified—and instead of coming to rub herself against me, as was her custom, she gave one long "mew-w-w" and crouching down close to the ground, she crept out of the room. I thought, "Well this looks guilty indeed. I am afraid Tizzy has eaten him, and if so she must be punished." There was a chair just under where the cage was hanging, and on it were two or three little yellow feathers, and also on the ground; so I felt sure then who was the culprit. Poor little bird! and poor Pussy! she must have been strongly tempted when she saw the little beauty outside the cage. I do not believe she would have ventured near the cage if it had been properly fastened. But how was she to know, when she saw a bird at liberty, that she might not catch and eat that as well as a mouse, which she was always encouraged to catch whenever one appeared.

"Did you not kill the cat?" a friend asked me soon afterwards. "I am sure I should have killed her on the spot." "Kill her!"

said I, "no certainly not," she only did what was her nature to do, the fault was mine for leaving the door unfastened.

I am not sure at this distance of time, whether I did beat her or not. I think not, but I followed her down stairs, and having a duster in my hand, I flapped it at her, and made her run, to signify my displeasure at her evil deed, and I think she was well punished by my not taking any notice of her for some hours.

It is of no use trying to teach dumb animals to distinguish between right and wrong, because God has not given them the same sense which he has given to us. We can teach them a great many things, and I *had* taught my cat not to go near the cage, but she had no power of reasoning, or of knowing that it was the *bird* she was not to touch.

We had a favourite cat at home many years ago, named Persia. She was a beautiful creature with long silky hair, a mixture of grey, brown, white and black, and a very bushy tail. She used regularly to knock at the drawing-room door, whenever she wanted to be let in. You would hardly believe what a noise she could make with her two front paws, when she chose to try. She was not a Persian cat, though her name might lead you to suppose so. That name was given to her for quite a different reason. She was a native, or at least her mother was, of the Black Forest in Germany.

She was so fond of her mistress, whom she was pretty sure of finding most hours in the day seated in one particular room, that she was seldom known to catch a mouse, without running up stairs with it in her mouth, to show it to her before eating it, and one day she made her appearance in the drawing-room with a large rat! You may fancy what a commotion she caused in the room, and how quickly she was driven down again into the

garden where she could amuse herself with her rat as long as she pleased.

We have a cat now who is a great curiosity in her way. She often goes out visiting for weeks together, and helps to clear a neighbour's premises of mice when they get over-run by them; and when her business is done, she is fetched home again, and remains as quietly as if she had never been away.

She is a terrible poacher, and the wonder is that she has never been caught in a trap, for she takes many a trip to some rabbit warren, which cannot be far away, though we have never yet discovered where it is, and often brings home a young rabbit, with which she plays for some time after it is dead, and then eats it.

A friend of mine told me lately of a favourite cat which had two little kittens, and her greatest friend in the house being a little boy of ten years old, she thought I suppose, that she could not do better than get her friend to help take care of her kittens.

So the little boy, who was sleeping in a small room without a fire place, and consequently always had his door left a little open at night, woke one morning feeling something very soft and warm against his cheek, and behold! when he opened his eyes, he saw on his pillow, two little soft warm kittens! I think it was such a pretty thing of the cat to show such faith and trust in her little friend, that she brought her greatest treasures and left them with him when he was asleep, feeling quite sure that they were safe. Her name was Daisy.

Lucy and Emily too could tell you a very similar story to this, for they have two cats which have both done much the same thing. Lucy has awoke in the morning and found a kitten in her

bed ; and I myself saw their beautiful white cat, Snowball, bring her little snowball in her mouth up into the dining room where the family were at dinner, because she could not be happy away from the children.

I could tell you many more little anecdotes of cats if I had not forgotten them, but perhaps as some of you are not fond of cats you have had enough, so I will proceed to tell you the curious story I mentioned before about

A CAT AND A HEN.

In the north of Ireland there was a comfortable farm-house, with plenty of pigs, and cows and fowls running about the place, and little children too ; and it was one of these children, who when grown up, remembered the facts well, and told them to me.

One of the hens had a nest full of eggs upon which she was sitting. You know a hen has to sit for three whole weeks, night and day, before the pretty little chickens come out of the shell ; and the hen never leaves her nest for long at a time, only just long enough to get some food and stretch her wings and legs a bit.

There was also a cat belonging to the farm-house, a pretty grey creature, which took a great fancy to the hen, and they became so fond of each other, that they were always together, and the cat would go and sit by the side of the hen's nest to keep her company. Was not that a funny thing ? But she did something still more curious, for whenever the hen left her eggs for a little while at either breakfast or dinner time, the cat would creep very gently and carefully into the nest, and lie over the eggs to

keep them warm till the hen returned ; and then the cat has been observed creeping out again just as carefully, and would take her seat again by the side of the hen.

This continued until the little chickens were hatched ; and even when they began to run about the garden with their mother, Pussy did not seem to think that her business was ended, for she then undertook the office of nurse, and used to follow her friend and the chickens wherever they went, and if one little chick happened to stray rather farther from the rest than she thought prudent, she would make a dart after it, as if she intended to seize it in her mouth ; but instead of that, she only drove it back to its mother.

One day a visitor came to call at the house accompanied by a little dog, probably a Skye terrier, for it was described to me as being covered with long shaggy hair.

This unfortunate little dog, thinking probably that there could be no harm in his taking a quiet walk round the garden while his mistress was in the house, happened to go rather too near to the hen and her family.

In an instant to his utter astonishment and consternation, he found himself violently attacked by the two friends. The hen flew on to the back of his neck, and flapped her wings vigorously over his head and eyes ; while the cat leaped on his back behind the hen, and used her claws with such effect, that the bits of woolly hair flew out of the poor animal's back in every direction ; and this continued in spite of the poor dog's screams and struggles till they had fairly driven him off the premises.

When they thought they had sent him to a safe distance, the two friends returned—the hen running as fast as her legs could

carry her, and the cat trotting behind, with her tail upright in the air, swelled to double its usual size.

This same cat was particularly attached to one of the children of the family, a boy of about eight or nine years old. This boy had a fever and was ill for some time. As soon as he became ill, the cat disappeared, and nothing was heard of her for so long, that they feared she was lost.

However one evening when Johnnie was getting a little better, and his friends were trying to persuade him to eat a little, he said he could eat nothing, unless it were some fresh trout out of the river.

There was a river close at hand which ran past the house, and in it were some very beautiful trout. But there was no one at home to go and catch one for him ; and besides, it was not only quite dark, but a violent thunderstorm was going on at the time. Johnnie was told he could not have a trout for supper that night, but perhaps the next day he should have one for dinner ; when suddenly such a strange thing happened—what do you think it was ?

Why who should make her appearance, and walk into the house, but Johnnie's long lost favourite cat ! and in her mouth was such a fine large trout, which she carried upstairs into Johnnie's room, and laid on the floor at the foot of his bed !

It was supposed that the cat had been watching the fish by the side of the river, when the storm came on, and that the thunder may have caused them to leap very high out of the water, and probably this particular one may have leaped farther than he intended, and landed on the bank where the cat caught him. But the strangest thing was, that she should have brought home to her little friend alive, instead of eating it, for you

know cats are excessively fond of fish. Perhaps she liked to show her friend everything she caught before eating it, in the same way as Persia did when she took a large rat into the drawing-room to show her mistress.

THE PET TOAD.

That is a curious kind of pet, is it not? Do you know where Hong-Kong is? Yes, some of you do, I know, and you very little ones, who do not know, must ask the elder ones to show you the place on the map of Asia.

In Hong-Kong there is a hospital, built on purpose for our English soldiers when they are ill, and near this hospital, a few years ago, a fountain was raised. As soon as the basin underneath began to fill with water, some toads found their way into it, and formed themselves into a little colony there. Near the spot was a large bamboo, in which a hole had been made, and in the hole a rail had been inserted during the process of forming the fountain.

When the rail was removed the hole remained, being about large enough to admit the ends of a man's two fingers.

The inside of the bamboo is quite hollow, and it was supposed that some time or other a young toad must have crept into the hole, and lived there till it was too big to come out again, so it lived on for years in its bamboo, apparently a very happy and a very contented toad.

The soldiers knew it well, and made quite a pet of it, and it knew them likewise, for it would answer to its name, and when they called "Jack," it would come and poke its head and its two fore paws out of the hole, and would take food from their hands.

And if it was left rather longer than it liked without notice, it would come and look out of the hole and call "wack, wack," very much like the noise that a duck makes; and then any one who happened to be near would go and talk to it, or perhaps give it some food, with which it seemed well pleased.

I was told that when one regiment left the place, they would give "Jack" in charge to the next that came, and so on from time to time probably until now, for as toads are known to be very long-lived, it is quite likely that Jack is still living in his bamboo, the soldiers' pet in Hong-Kong.

THE PET PIG.

Many years ago in my childhood's home, we kept a variety of animals, pigs among the rest.

Once upon a time we had a very large family of little pigs, eighteen in number! some white, some black, others spotted, but all such pretty little fat clean soft things; for do you know, I think very young pigs, when they are about as big as a kitten, are some of the prettiest little creatures there are, though they become ugly when they grow big, coarse and dirty.

All these little things were healthy and fat, except one. Just one poor little black skinny weak creature, which had no strength or power to fight and squabble over their breakfast as the others did, and which is the nature of pigs to do; so the consequence was, that this poor little blacky was pushed aside by his stronger brothers and sisters and got none, and so was nearly starved.

Indeed every one thought it must die, for you can hardly fancy what a miserable little object it was. His mistress thought she

should like to try if she could save him; so he was brought into the house, laid in a basket with a lid to cover over him, and some flannel inside, and placed before the fire in the drawing-room, and several times a day, he was given milk to suck out of a tea-pot. At first he was so weak, that he was scarcely able to take any nourishment at all, but by degrees, his tea-pot food agreed so well with him, that he seemed to enjoy it very much, and he began to fill out, and not look so much like a bag of bones as he did at first. When he was hungry, he would lift up the lid of the basket with his head, and poke his little nose out, and make some small feeble grunts by way of giving notice that he was expecting to be fed. We children gave him the name of Doodle, and he was becoming every day stronger and fatter, till one day it so happened that the drawing-room being unusually full of visitors, Doodle was for a time forgotten, and though he had given several grunts to call himself to remembrance, no heed was immediately taken of him. Doodle did not like this at all, and he made up his mind at once that he would not put up with it. So raising his voice and his head at the same time, he began to grunt and squeak by turns, and pushing up the lid of the basket which he was well able to do, for he was a fat strong little pig now, he scrambled out, and commenced running about the room in a state of high indignation, astonishing the lady visitors more than I can tell you, for they had never before heard of, or seen a drawing-room pig!

But Doodle had settled his drawing-room business by this ungentlemanly behaviour. It was thought high time after this to dismiss him to more suitable apartments, and from that time he had to be contented with a rabbit hutch in the poultry yard, where he lived till he was big enough to take his place and fight his own battles in the general piggery. Well, now I do not think

that I have any more to say about long-ago pets. I seem to have come to the end of all my recollections, so I must bring you down to our own times, and ask you to look at that country place and the miller's house, where I lodged that beautiful summer three years ago, and where my Jack, Dick and Bob lived with me.

For the information of any of you little ones who never heard of that story, I must explain that those names belonged to three young jackdaws, which I found among the ruins of an old castle in Sussex, and which I nursed and reared till they grew to be fine strong birds, and did enough funny things to fill a small book.

Bob was given away. Poor Dick disappeared very mysteriously, and Jack has never been satisfactorily accounted for to the minds of many of my little readers. And it is in order to fulfil my promise to them, that I am now going to answer their often repeated question,

WHAT BECAME OF JACK?

What was to become of Jack, was a question that puzzled me very much for many weeks before I left the spot where he and his brothers had been reared and educated, and where he had lived all his life from the day that I brought him and them from their uncomfortable hole among the ruins of Hurstmonceaux Castle. Jack was growing every week more independent. He had quite a genius for inventing fresh amusements for himself, so that if he came into the house, I scarcely dared take my eye off him, lest some catastrophe should happen to the walls and furniture.

For, even before poor Dick was lost, they were both very clever in peeling bits of paper off the walls, and there was one part near the hall door which they had cleared entirely as far as they could reach up the wall. In my parlour too, if I had not been constantly on the watch, I should have had every bit of paper neatly stripped off within reach of the mantel-piece, upon the edge of which they would perch, for the purpose of doing their favourite bit of mischief.

And a new hassock which I had bought to supply the want of a footstool, was a favourite plaything with both of them. I never dared leave the room even for five minutes, without first closing the window enough to prevent their entrance, and once when I had forgotten this necessary precaution, I found on my return that visitors had been in the room, and you would have laughed as I did to see what funny things they had done during the short time of my absence.

In the first place there was a little brass clock which I always kept on the mantel-piece, lying on its face instead of standing upright, but it was uninjured; and a box of matches which had been standing beside it, was lying on the ground and many of the matches were scattered on the floor. I thought what a good thing it was that they were the "safety matches," and could not ignite unless they were rubbed on the box, otherwise my poor birds might have been very much frightened and injured too, if they were playing with a match and it happened to explode in their faces.

Perhaps you will say it would serve them right, for touching what they ought not to touch—but then you know they did not know any better, and it is their nature to be mischievous, so it would be very cruel to punish them for what they could not avoid.

But it is very different with children. I have known some little boys and girls who are also very fond of touching everything they see, and they often do a great deal of mischief, just because they will not mind what is said to them, and *leave things alone* that do not belong to them.

We can laugh at the mischief which birds do, but we cannot laugh when little children act in the same way, because it is a sign that they have forgotten that God says in His Holy Word, "Obey them that have the rule over you." Try and remember that, dear children.

One day I forgot to fasten a muslin curtain (which I was in the habit of doing) over the open window of my bedroom; and the consequence was, that I found all the pins most carefully pulled out of the pincushion, and scattered about the table and ground; and worse than this, a looking-glass which was set like a picture in a wooden frame, covered with gilt paper to look like gilding, was in one part entirely despoiled of its gilt coat, leaving the bare wood exposed.

This was growing serious, so that latterly I was in constant fear of hearing of some terrible misdeed of Jack's which perhaps I should not be able to repair.

My little landlady was one of the most good-tempered women I ever knew, or I am sure she never would have borne what she did. Jack had a fancy every morning, as soon as I let him out of my window, which was in the front of the house, for flying immediately round to the back, and perching himself in a large apple tree which was just opposite, and very near to the mistress' bedroom. There he would sit and watch with his most cunning look, his head on one side, and one eye fixed intently on the window until she opened it, and that very moment in he dashed.

—not once or twice, but every morning. He could not be satisfied with tormenting his own mistress, but he would go to those who did not want him. Yet so good-natured was my landlady, that she actually kept her bedroom window very nearly shut day after day, during all that hot summer without a word of complaint. I am sure I would not have done so for anybody's birds, neither did I for my own, for I invented a kind of tight muslin cover, which answered the double purpose of keeping out the intruders, and admitting the air.

Another thing Jack took to doing, and which I feared would annoy the household, was paying them a visit in the kitchen during their meals. He was very fond of the master of the house, and whenever he could find him seated by the fire he would be sure to station himself on his shoulder; and has even been known to try and make a perch for himself on the long pipe which he often found in the master's mouth. Latterly too, he would follow him any where out of doors, and often play the same tricks with his hat which he did with mine. I dare say you remember how he used to serve me when he wanted to stand on my head, and when he thought the hat had no right to be there.

I was very pleased to see Jack's growing attachment to the master, because I was trying to make up my mind to leave him behind when I left the place, for I had no means of keeping him where I was going, unless I confined him entirely in a cage, and that I knew would make him miserable as he had never been used to it. So that idea was given up, and there was nothing to be done but to let him stay where he was, though I feared he would not be so happy as he had been. I knew that he would certainly have to give up his bedroom in the house when I was gone, but as he

was fond of being with the fowls, he would perhaps have been contented to perch among the trees at night as they did, so *that* difficulty might have been overcome, but now there arose a new trouble and a more serious one.

The mistress used to have a grand wash about once in three weeks, and on these occasions, besides the "lines" which extended from one end of the garden to the other, there was not a bush or hedge within reach, that was not covered with the clean white linen, and one could scarcely walk in any part of the garden, without finding a long sheet flapping in one's face on a windy day, or a towel or petticoat wrapping itself round one's head. Therefore I was in the habit of keeping out of reach of these things, and very much did I wish that Jack could be induced to do the same. But no! Jack thought that no business could go on without his assistance, and, as if he wished to do a good turn to the button makers, he made it a point of duty, as soon as the shirts were hung out, to try the strength of every button within his reach, and if he could possibly succeed in breaking one off, nothing delighted him more.

This in itself was provoking enough, but in addition, he would perch on the clothes all along the line, and patter about on them, not always with the cleanest feet, talking very fast to himself all the time, and leaving the print of his claws in a variety of positions on the wet linen, besides in other ways considerably destroying the good effects of the wash-tub.

I am not sure that he did not believe that the clothes were hung there for his own especial amusement and nothing else; for I have known him stand behind or walk quietly round the persons who were engaged in hanging them out, as if he were wait-

ing till they had done, and then as soon as they moved away, he would instantly be on the top of the line. A general shriek and rush would follow his appearance there, and he would be driven off, only to be found on the same spot three minutes afterwards.

This of course could not be permitted, and it generally ended in my being summoned to carry him off and put him in prison—and then it was melancholy work for poor Jack hour after hour confined in his dark cupboard, with no hope of being released that day. It made me dread the washing days, more than Sundays for Jack's sake.

And so days passed on, the time for my departure was approaching, and the grand washing day again came round, the last which would take place during my stay. As soon as I caught a glimpse of the white articles one by one spreading themselves over the garden on that morning, I knew that trouble was at hand. I started off with Jack's favourite old hat upon my head, to look after him, and to see how matters stood. There sure enough was my good little landlady, as busy as a bee, pegging up her linen on the line, as fast or faster than I ever saw any one else do it; far too busy to observe what I saw in a moment, that she was closely followed by her little torment Jack, who was dodging about backwards and forwards behind her, running with his little short quick steps up to each article, yet contriving most cleverly to keep out of her sight, knowing perfectly well that he had no business there. As soon as he saw me, he forgot his mischief for the moment, and came to have a game with my hat. Hoping to occupy him with something else, I walked away with him on my head to the other side of the garden, offered him all

the most tempting things that could be thought of, begged him to take his bath, or to come indoors, to torment me as much as he liked, any thing if he would but keep out of the way of the clean clothes—and even as a last resource I took him into the field, as far away as possible, where his friend the cow was quietly lying down at rest.

She was a nice gentle old creature, so I went up to her to try and make Jack amuse himself by catching the flies on her back. This pleased him for a few minutes, but no sooner was I beginning to feel satisfied that he had found an employment, and was looking for a shady seat where I could rest quietly and watch him, than I had to rush at him and snatch him away from the poor cow! for, he had just discovered a little place on her back where the skin had been rubbed off, and which of course must have been very tender if touched, so that I had to drive him away, lest he should hurt her. And so Jack, finding that he could not do as he liked, thought he had had enough of the field, and spreading his beautiful wings flew back to the garden, with me in full chase after him, in terror for the shirt buttons.

Oh! such a little torment as Jack was at these times, you could hardly imagine, and yet so amusing in his ways that it was impossible to be angry with him. But poor little fellow, it became necessary to put a stop to his fun. It was plain it would never do to leave him behind, for he would be a trouble to every body, and it was not to be expected that any one could put up with him as I did. And so at last I was obliged to make up my mind to get rid of my beautiful Jack.

If any person could have been found who would have taken him to a distance, and kept him where he could enjoy his

liberty and fly about the fields and gardens, I should have been very glad. Ah ! little Ralph, I only wish I had known you then, for I think you would have been pleased to have saved his life, and taken care of him.

Living in a cage was out of the question—so there was but one thing to be done and it was the kindest thing for poor Jack too. He must be got rid of. And I spoke to a person whom I knew I could trust, to take away Jack and never let me hear any thing more about him. And so my pretty bird disappeared and nobody ever saw him afterwards ; and now you know why I did not like to tell you this before.

It is some satisfaction to know that he was not left behind when I went away, and that he could not be shut up in a dark closet for days together, or be teased and worried by the cruel boys in the neighbourhood, who would have rejoiced in their opportunities for hurting him when nobody was near to look after him.

One word more about Bob, and I have done. You remember that he went to live at the Police Station. They named him Jacob, and he was a great favourite with the family, who gave him rather too much liberty. The consequence was, Bob took an opportunity when the family were out of the way, of walking into the drawing-room to inspect the furniture. He opened the chair and sofa cushions to see what was inside, tore the curtains, and committed sundry other misdemeanours, until they were obliged to part with him ; and he was given away to a neighbour who was very anxious to have him. I believe he lived very happily there for some time, till one morning poor Bob was found dead in the yard, having as they supposed eaten something which must have poisoned him.

THE OLD TURKEY COCK.

The facts contained in the story I am now about to relate, occurred in the same place, and about the same time as those in the one I have just finished.

One day very early in the morning at the time of year when it is light at three o'clock, the mistress happened to be up and about sooner than usual.

On going into the poultry yard, she heard as she thought some unusual sounds, and looking round, she saw in one corner of the yard, a great strange turkey cock, which had no business there at all, with all his feathers ruffled up, in the midst of a battle with her own good sober old cock. And the turkey was getting the best of it too, for he had already stripped the other poor bird of a large portion of his feathers, and was now pecking at his head in a most unmerciful manner.

She soon drove away the intruder, and did the best she could to comfort his victim, for he looked sadly crest-fallen and woe-begone with half his feathers plucked out, and his head and comb torn and stained with blood.

You may be sure the whole household felt great pity for the poor cock. I went out to see him as soon as I heard the story, for he was a great friend and favourite of mine. He was generally the first to come and meet me of a morning, when I took the fowls some breakfast from my table of either crumbs or sop. But on this morning, he crept away into a corner and seemed quite ashamed of himself, and anxious to hide from every body; and no amount of coaxing or petting could make him feel at ease, and no wonder, for he must have been in great pain poor fellow.

Well, in the course of a few days he began to feel better, and to hold up his head again, as every handsome bird should do. And he strutted about and came to me for his breakfast, and was much as usual in his manners, though his beauty was gone for the present; and his poor bare neck and head kept up in the minds of every one who saw him, a continual remembrance of the ill-treatment he had received, while all this time, what was the turkey about?

Why, apparently the old coward was watching his opportunity, when he could get every person out of the way, that he might make a fresh attack upon the poor harmless cock, which had never injured him, and who, though a very courageous fellow in his own way, and well able to drive any of his own species out of his premises if they intruded, had no chance whatever with this great big bully, with his large wings, and heavy body, and sharp strong beak and claws.

It is something like a great strong boy thrashing a little weak one, and what can be more cowardly and despicable than that? You may well ask what did the turkey want in that farm-yard. Ah! what indeed! His own home was at the other end of the town, and he had no business whatever at our end. I suppose he had that very disagreeable habit of liking to interfere in other birds' business. Like some people, little as well as big, who never can be satisfied to attend to their own affairs, but must always be poking and prying about to see what others are doing, and interfering in what does not concern them.

So, I suppose this old turkey wanted to see what the miller's fowls were about, and when our brave old cock tried to do his duty and rid the premises of such an intruder, he got the worst of it.

I said the turkey was watching his opportunity for another attack. The reason I thought so was, that two or three times in the very early mornings I had heard him gobbling about in the neighbourhood.

I mentioned this to some of the inmates of the house, and we all agreed in expecting that the cowardly fellow would soon come nearer. I had arranged with Fanny (a great strong girl of 14) who was afraid of neither turkey, nor any other bird or beast, that the next time I heard him near enough, I should call her up and she would drive him away.

Accordingly one fine bright morning about four o'clock, my room being in the front of the house, I was awoke by the sound of "gobble, gobble, gobble" very near, and on listening a moment I perceived that it was coming nearer. Up I jumped and looked out of the window. There was the turkey in full sail, with all his feathers puffed out like a balloon, strutting down the road, looking as warlike as it is possible for any such great coward to look.

I watched till I saw him arrive at the five-barred gate leading into the poultry yard, that I might make quite sure of his intentions.

He stopped close to the gate, took one look up, and then made a spring to the top; then when once I saw him perched there, I waited to see no more, but hastened to Fanny's door,—“Fanny, Fanny” I called, but the poor child was in a sound sleep and answered not. I felt quite sorry to disturb her at that early hour, and hesitated a moment whether to call again, or to leave her in peace, but the sound of the “gobble, gobble” was in my ears, and every

moment was precious. So I gently pushed open the door a little way and said, "Oh! Fanny mak ehaste, the old turkey is come. Be quick." And up she jumped in a moment; and while she was dressing herself, I returned to my window to see what the creature was doing. There I saw him, chasing poor Chanticleer in the queerest manner you ever saw. Not as perhaps you might fancy, running or scuffling along the ground as fast as legs assisted by wings could carry them, but marching—yes actually marching a slow measured pace, round and round the house!

Really, though I felt so sorry and frightened too at the idea of what was likely to happen directly, it was enough to make one laugh to see, first the cock, taking very long slow strides with his head stretched out before him, as if he were looking for something on the ground, followed about a yard behind by the turkey, marching much in the same manner, only his head was held up higher. I suppose his intention was presently to spring suddenly upon the poor thing and attack his head and neck as before; and only fancy what dreadful pain that would be, with the old wounds scarcely yet healed!

So I was getting more and more alarmed that Fanny would not come in time, till at last, however, to my great relief, before they came round under my window a second time, I heard her voice shouting to the turkey something in this fashion: "Ah! you dare—will you now—I'll soon have you—you dare now—ah! if you touch him"—and so on, while all the time she was in full chase after the great awkward waddling bird, who had enough to do now to look after himself instead of his neighbours, and was bustling, scuffling, and dodging into corners to escape an enemy whom he had never dreamed of when first he started on his law-

less expedition. Oh! such a chase as that was! I am sure I stood at my window and laughed till I could laugh no longer, to see that young girl darting about, trying to catch the cunning fellow, rushing at him with both hands extended, and as he cleverly eluded her grasp, almost falling forward on her face in her efforts to seize him. She had no fear for herself whatever, and this gave her all the more advantage.

I suspect that some of you little ones, would have been for running into the house instead of out of it, and shutting the door close, rather than face the enemy as Fanny did. But she had no notion of being conquered by a cowardly old turkey, and so at last, after a great hunt, she succeeded in catching him, and actually took him up in her arms something in the fashion of a little child of four or five years old, taking up one still younger; holding it in front with both arms clasped round its body, looking as if both must fall forward together every moment.

And this was the most laughable scene of all. I never can help laughing even now when I think of it, though it happened three years ago. Fanny panting and breathless, with her face as red as the turkey's, had as much as she could do to carry such a weight, strong girl as she was.

The turkey perfectly quiet and vanquished, with his two legs stretched out before him, and his head and neck still farther, looking as silly as a turkey possibly can look. I assure you it was a picture, not to be easily forgotten.

"Where shall I put him?" screamed Fanny. "Take him to the stable," said a voice from some window. And off she staggered with her burden to the empty stable, and shut him in. So the poor turkey was shut up in the dark for a bit, to give him time

to collect his thoughts if he had any to collect, instead of going home to his breakfast; while all his turkey friends perhaps were wondering what had become of him, and thought they would not wait breakfast for him any longer,—and all this, just because he would not stay at home and mind his own business! The old fellow had a good many visitors that morning. I could not help feeling sorry for him, he looked so frightened, with a scared look in his eyes every time the door was opened. Not like a balloon now, but quite long and thin, with all his feathers laid flat down, and his neck stretched out very long.

You see the poor old bird had not sense to know he had done wrong. Most likely when he was a small young turkey his mother had never told him it was naughty to fight, and cowardly to attack a weaker bird, and wrong to go prying about into his neighbour's premises, so how should he know better?

Well, about noon the question arose, what should be done with him? It was necessary to do something to make him remember to keep away for the future, and yet not to hurt him.

In the garden there was a small pond, only a few yards across, and as turkeys do not like water at all, it was proposed to give him a bath in this pond, and he would be sure to remember it for some time to come.

So we called Thomas, who was a very strong man, to carry him to the pond. And Thomas went into the stable and took him up in his arms much more easily of course than Fanny did, though even he found the old gentleman a good weight, and he carried him to the edge of the pond, and then threw him in, while every body stood round to see the end of it. And if I mistake not.

Jack and Dick were there also, looking on from the branch of a tree and wondering what all this commotion was about.

Such a great splash as the poor turkey made you would hardly fancy ; but he was not thrown in far enough, for he only just went in at the edge, and managed to scramble out again immediately without getting very wet.

Every one thought he had not had enough ; so Thomas caught him up again, just as he was bringing his poor dragged tail into its place out of the water, and this time he sent him quite into the middle of the pond. After another tremendous splash, he rose on the water, and swam beautifully across to the other side, where he was allowed to get out without any one molesting him farther. Glad enough you may be sure he was to make his escape, and from that day, we never saw or heard anything more of the old turkey-cock.

He had a lesson which I suspect would last him all his life, and in that respect he proved himself a wise bird, however foolish he may have been in other ways. It is always a wise thing if we allow a punishment to benefit us. It does us very little good, if we forget it as soon as it is past, and then go and commit the same fault again. *That* is not being so wise as the old turkey.

The best thing for us to remember at all times is, "Thou God seest me," and this should keep us from doing anything which we know is displeasing to God. You know we cannot please God of ourselves without the help of His Holy Spirit, but He has promised to give His Spirit to those that ask for it. We have no strength of our own, but if we believe in Jesus and trust Him,

He has promised that He will never fail those who come to Him, and His strength is sufficient for us.

It is a blessed thing for little ones like you, to give your hearts to Jesus in your youth. You know there is an especial promise for you,—“I love them that love me, and *those that seek me EARLY shall find me.*”—Proverbs viii. 17.

That you may each and all, dear children, have grace to seek this best of friends now in the morning of your days, that you may cling to Him through life, and when time shall be no more that you may dwell with Him for ever,

Is the earnest prayer of

Your affectionate friend,

E. G.

May, 1868.

THE END.

He has promised that He will give you
 and His strength is sufficient for all
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 Your affectionate friend,
 E. G.



May 1888

THE END

